

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 EB-08
COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /078 W
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FM AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0602
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BORDEAUX 0045

E.O 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER RAYMOND BARRE S VISIT TO THE
AQUITAINE REGION

1. SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER S VISIT TO THE AQUITAINE ECONOMIC
REGION SERVED TO HIGHLIGHT NOT ONLY THE ECONOMIC/LABOR
PROBLEMS OF THIS AREA AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY MIRACLE SOLUTIONS
TO THOSE PROBLEMS, BUT ALSO EXISTING POLITICAL DIVISIONS IN
FRANCE ON THE EVE OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. WHILE THE PCF,
THE CGT AND CFTD BOYCOTTED THE PRIME MINISTER, BORDEAUX S
DEPUTY/MAYOR CHABAN-DELMAS VOICED SUPPORT FOR THE PRIME
MINISTER S ECONOMIC PROGRAM AND TERMED ITS SUCCESS AS
INDISPENSABLE TO FRENCH INTERESTS. BARRE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY
TO REITERATE THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE ITS POLICIES
WITH RESOLVE AND REBUTTED CHIRAC S RECENT STATEMENT IN ST
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NAZAIRE ON THE NECESSITY OF RESTORING THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE.
ALSO, IN A REGIONAL TELEVISION INTERVIEW, BARRE OPPOSED FURTHER
NATIONALIZATIONS OF THE FRENCH ECONOMY AS PROPOSED BY THE LEFTS
COMMON PROGRAM AND CALLED FOR MORE MOBILITY IN THE LABOR MARKET
AS A MEANS OF REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT IN FRANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER RAYMOND BARRE S VISIT TO THE ECONOMIC REGION

OF THE AQUITAINE (MONT DE MARSAN AND BORDEAUX) FEBRUARY 14 - 15
SERVED TO HIGHLIGHT THE SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND LABOR PROBLEMS
THIS REGION IS FACING AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY MIRACLE SOLUTIONS
ON THE PART OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES
IN THE AQUITAINE INDICATE THAT 5.7 PERCENT OF THE ACTIVE
POPULATION IS UNEMPLOYED AGAINST A NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 4.6
PERCENT. JACQUES CHABAN-DELMAS STRESSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER
THAT REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT MUST BE THE IMMEDIATE PREOCCUPATION
OF THE AUTHORITIES. BARRE WAS EXPOSED TO THE REGION S MAJOR
ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES INCLUDING THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE OF THE
PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRY, THE DECLINE AND FRAGILE POSITION OF
THE TRADITIONAL SECTOR SUCH AS SHOE MANUFACTURING AND TEXTILES,
DIFFICULTIES IN THE AERONAUTICAL INDUSTRY, THE PROBLEMS OF THE
WHITE WINE GROWERS AND THE SORRY STATE OF THE ROAD SYSTEM IN
THE AQUITAINE WHICH HAS ONLY 72 KMS OF HIGHWAY.

3. BARRE WAS WELL BRIEFED ON THESE PROBLEMS, BUT OBVIOUSLY
DID NOT HAVE ANY IMMEDIATE OVERALL SOLUTIONS. IN A SPIRIT OF
REALISM HE INFORMED HIS INTERLOCUTORS THAT HE HAD BEFORE HIM
THREE MAJOR DOSSIERS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: 1) THE RESTRUCT-
URING OF KEY INDUSTRIAL SECTORS, 2) THE MANAGEMENT AND
FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE NATIONALIZED INDUSTRIES IN FRANCE,
AND 3) THE DEFICIT IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM. ANY
APPROACH TO MORE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS SUCH AS THOSE IN THE
AQUITAINE REGION WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED WITHIN THIS OVERALL
CONTEXT, BARRE IMPLIED. AREAS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND AID WHICH
BARRE MENTIONED WERE : A) THE RESUMPTION OF DRILLING IN THE
BAY OF BISCAY (ZONE IBIS 2) AS SOON AS AGREEMENT IS REACHED
BETWEEN THE OIL COMPANIES AND THE GOVERNMENT, B) GOVERNMENT
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EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRY IN THE LACQ
REGION NEAR PAU, EVEN IF CERTAIN REFINERIES BELONGING TO ELF
ARE CLOSED DOWN, C) A MODERN COMMERCIAL ROAD SYSTEM TO THE
NEW CONTAINER PORT OF LE VERDON WHICH WILL AID THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE INDUSTRIAL ZONE THERE, D) SUB-DEALERSHIP CONTRACTS
GOING TO A LOCAL COMPANY (POTEZ) AT AIRE SUR L ADOUR AS A
RESULT OF THE RECENT SALE OF FALCON JETS BY DASSAULT TO THE
US COAST GUARD, E) SOGERMA AT MERIGNAC WILL BE THE OFFICIAL
REPAIR CENTER FOR JAGUAR THE NEW AIRPLANE OF THE FRENCH AIR
FORCE. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF
THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMITTEE SHOULD DECIDE TO CLASSIFY A
LARGE PART OF THE AQUITAINE AS A DEPRESSED ECONOMIC REGION.
ON THE VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION OF A HIGHWAY LINKING POITIERS
AND BORDEAUX TO COMPLETE THE PARIS-BORDEAUX NETWORK, BARRE
OFFERED NO SPECIFIC COMMITMENT TO LOCAL OFFICIALS WHICH CAUSED
MUCH DISAPPOINTMENT SINCE IT IS HOPED THAT THIS HIGHWAY WILL
BE IN PLACE BY 1982 OR 1983.

4. JACQUES CHABAN-DELMAS SUPPORTED BARRE S ANTI-INFLATION

POLICIES AND STATED THAT NO CITIZEN, DESPITE HIS POLITICS, COULD WISH THE PRIME MINISTER FAILURE AND THAT HE CONSIDERED BARRE S SUCCESS AS INDISPENSABLE TO THE INTERESTS OF FRANCE. CHABAN ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER TO HAVE THE GOVERNMENT ELABORATE A GLOBAL REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE AQUITAINE AS WAS DONE FOR BRETAGNE. THE SOCIALIST GROUP IN THE AQUITAINE REGIONAL COUNCIL CONSIDERED THE PRIME MINISTER S VISIT TO BE NEGATIVE. MICHEL SAINTE MARIE, THE SOCIALIST DEPUTY/MAYOR OF MERIGNAC AND PRESIDENT OF THE GROUP, STATED THAT QUOTE MR. RAYMOND BARRE HAS NOT CONSIDERED ANY ACTION IN DEPTH, AND HAS LIMITED HIMSELF TO REPEATING ONCE AGAIN THE PERPETUAL PROMISES OF HIS PREDECESSORS UNQUOTE. AS FOR THE CGT, THE CFDT AND THE FEN, THESE UNIONS MET FOR ONLY TWO MINUTES WITH RAYMOND BARRE AND ASKED HIM TO WITHDRAW HIS STATEMENT AT TARBES AND IN BORDEAUX THAT HE WOULD NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WORKER DEMONSTRATIONS AND WOULD NOT MOVE ONE MILLEMMETER FROM HIS POLICY BECAUSE OF THESE MANIFESTATIONS. BARRE RESPONDED THAT

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HIS PROPOSALS WERE NOT INTENDED TO BE INSULTING, THAT THE POLICY OF HIS GOVERNMENT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION AND THE WORKERS AS A WHOLE, APPROVED BY THE PARLIAMENT, AND THAT IN THESE CONDITIONS HE WOULD NOT CHANGE HIS POLICY. HE ASKED THE TRADE-UNIONS TO DEBATE THE PROBLEMS AND NOT TO LOWER THE LEVEL OF THE DEBATE BY STREET DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH WOULD CHANGE NOTHING. ONLY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CFTC, THE CGC AND THE FO REMAINED FOR APPROXIMATELY HALF AN HOUR, BUT MADE NO STATEMENT ON THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

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-----171153Z 075897 /21

R 170925Z FEB 77
FM AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0603
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AMCONSUL LYON
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AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 BORDEAUX 0045

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER RAYMOND BARRE S VISIT TO THE
AQUITAINE REGION.

5. CONCERNING THE ECONOMY, BARRE MADE TWO INTERESTING STATEMENTS: ONE ON WORKER MOBILITY IN THE FRENCH ECONOMY, AND THE OTHER ON NATIONALIZATION. CONCERNING LABOR POLICY AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING, HE SAID THAT IN AN ECONOMY SUCH AS FRANCE S LABOR MOBILITY HELPS CREATE EMPLOYMENT. EACH YEAR MILLIONS OF WORKERS CHANGE THEIR JOBS OR EMPLOYER AND THAT, WHILE CERTAIN INDUSTRIES DECLINE AND OTHERS IMPROVE, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES INCREASES AND THAT LABOR MOBILITY IS ONE OF THE CONDITIONS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS. TODAY, THE PRIORITY SHOULD GO TO THE TRAINING OF THOSE WORKERS WHO DO NOT HAVE JOBS, NOT TO PERFECTING THOSE WHO ALREADY HAVE EMPLOYMENT. IN DISCUSSING THE FORMATION OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR BARRE MADE CLEAR HIS OPINION THAT CERTAIN ENTERPRISES IN DIFFICULTY WILL BE OBLIGED TO LAY-OFF SOME OF THEIR WORKERS, THAT THERE ARE UNCLASSIFIED

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CERTAIN INDUSTRIES WHICH ARE CONDEMNED, AND INSTEAD OF TRYING TO PROLONG THEIR AGONY IT WOULD BE BETTER, IN CERTAIN CASES, TO CLOSE THESE ENTERPRISES AND TO RECLASSIFY THE WORKERS IN OTHER JOBS.

6. AS FOR FURTHER NATIONALIZATION, BARRE STATED ON A LOCAL TV STATION THAT THE NATIONALIZATIONS THAT WERE UNDERTAKEN AFTER THE WAR WERE JUSTIFIED BECAUSE IT WAS A QUESTION OF CONTROLLING KEY SECTORS HAVING A MONOPOLY POSITION IN THE ECONOMY, BUT THAT THE NATIONALIZATIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE UNITED LEFT S COMMON PROGRAM ARE NOT JUSTIFIED. HE EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN THAT FRANCE WOULD BECOME A COLLECTIVIST SOCIETY IF THE COMMON-PROGRAM WERE TO BE APPLIED, HE SAID IT IS ONE THING TO HAVE 25 PERCENT OF FRENCH INDUSTRY NATIONALIZED AND ANOTHER TO HAVE 70 PERCENT OF IT NATIONALIZED. HE POINTED OUT THAT LARGE FRENCH ENTERPRISES WHICH RISK NATIONALIZATION UNDER THE COMMON-PROGRAM DO NOT ACTUALLY ENJOY A MONOPOLY POSITION SINCE THEY HAVE TO FACE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION.

7. PESTERED WITH QUESTIONS ON HIS PREDECESSOR S POLITICAL STATEMENTS AND SPECIFICALLY THE ONE CHIRAC HAD MADE AT ST

NAZAIRE THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO RESTORE THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE, RAYMOND BARRE SHOWED HIS ANNOYANCE BY STATING: QUOTE I HAVE A HIGH ESTEEM FOR MY PREDECESSOR, MR. CHIRAC, BUT I DO THINK I SHOULD ANSWER QUESTIONS ON MY PRESENT IMPORTANT VISIT TO THE AQUITAINE, AND NOT HAVE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON EVERY STATEMENT MADE BY MY PREDECESSOR. UNQUOTE HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT S PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN LAID DOWN, APPROVED BY THE PARLIAMENT, AND WILL BE APPLIED IN A FIRM AND RESOLUTE MANNER, THEREBY REJECTING CHIRAC S ALLEGATIONS THAT THERE IS A CRISIS IN THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE.

8. COMMENT. IN SUM, RAYMOND BARRE S VISIT TO THE AQUITAINE DEMONSTRATES THAT THIS REGION S SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND LABOR PROBLEMS ARE NOT GOING TO BE RESOLVED BY ANY MAGIC REMEDY OR MASTER PLAN EMANATING FROM PARIS. IN SHORT, THERE ISN T ANY.
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SPECIFIC EFFORTS WILL BE MADE IN THE SECTORS BARRE MENTIONED TO AID THE REGIONAL ECONOMY TO PROGRESS AND FACE ITS PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, LOCAL LEADERS AND OFFICIALS NOW SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBTS THAT THE AQUITAINE WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE ITS PLACE IN PARIS RANK ORDERING OF PRIORITIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL TO GET THE NATIONAL ECONOMY AS A WHOLE MOVING AGAIN. BARRE S VISIT ALSO SHOWS THAT THE POLITICAL DIVISIONS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL ARE QUICKLY REPLAYED AT THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS AS WITNESSED BY THE ATTITUDE OF THE SOCIALIST GROUP TO HIS VISIT AND THE BOYCOTT BY THE COMMUNIST AND LEFTIST UNIONS. CHABAN-DELMAS TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT BARRE, SELECTIVELY, AND, OF COURSE, TO SHOW THAT HE IS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO GET THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVED IN AIDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMY. ALL SIDES AND ALL POLITICAL FACTIONS SIMPLY ADOPTED WHAT THEY CONSIDERED TO BE THE MOST PROFITABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD BARRE S VISIT ON THE EVE OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.DJEREJIAN

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Message Attributes

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